

Letter and enclosure from J. H. Spencer to Alexander Graham Bell, April 1, 1917

Dubuque, Iowa, April 1, 1917. 7 Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, Washington, D. C. My Dear Dr. Bell:

Your recent letter regarding the work for the deaf that we are attempting in Iowa was very much appreciated. My delay in answering has been due to the fact that I have been swamped with work in connection with our two bills, now before the Legislature.

One of these bills transfers the state school from the Board of Control to the Board of Education. This bill has already passed the House and I think is sure to pass the Senate. It will mean a first-class school at Council Bluffs in due season, with a segregated oral department.

The other is the day school bill. Has already passed both houses and will become a law as soon as signed by the governor. We consider it an excellent law. Limits the age of attendance to 10 years and under, and says nothing about "method" of instruction, that being left to the state board of education. I have not a copy left, but will forward one later,* it is not much like the bill referred to in your letter to me. It took us many months to get all the factions to agree on this bill, and the session of the Legislature was two-thirds gone before we succeeded. Iowa now presents the interesting spectacle of all the forces interested in the education of the deaf presenting a "solid front" before the Legislature—if we except the aged Superintendent of the state school.

* I found a copy of bill. Think it was not changed either by House or Senate, but have written to make sure.

Library of Congress

It is my hope that the leaders in this good work will "get together " on some program like the one we have put over in Iowa, and put a stop to these factional fights before state legislatures; these fights are disgraceful in my opinion, and injurious to the good cause for which we are all working.

Sincerely, J.H.Spencer

Substitute for Senate File No. 331

A BILL FOR AN ACT

TO AUTHORIZE SCHOOL CORPORATIONS TO PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR DEAF CHILDREN AND TO PROVIDE STATE AID THEREFOR.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

Section 1. That any school corporation within the state having residing therein deaf children of school age may provide one or more special instructors for such deaf children, the instruction given under such special instructors to be substantially equivalent to that given other children of corresponding age in the graded schools.

Sec. 2. That to any school corporation providing such instruction and complying with all of the provisions of this act there shall be granted and paid as hereinafter provided state aid in an amount to be computed at eleven dollars for each month that each child not more than ten years of age is instructed under the provisions of this act. No child more than ten years of age shall be admitted to such instruction.

Sec. 3. That when any school corporation shall elect to proceed under the provisions of this act it shall, through its proper officers, communicate that fact to the state board of education, and the state board of education shall have general supervision of all matters arising under this act, and no instructor shall be appointed hereunder and no courses

Library of Congress

or methods of instruction shall be installed hereunder without the approval of such state board of education.

Sec. 4. That the state aid herein provided for shall be paid annually at the end of the school year upon properly authenticated and verified claim in form as may be required by the state board of education, and when such claim is approved by the state board of education the auditor of state shall draw warrant accordingly.

Sec. 5. That for the purpose of paying the state aid granted under this act there is hereby appropriated out of any funds in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated a sum sufficient therefor, such appropriation to be available for the school year 1917–1918 and annually thereafter.